

May 2007

East Timor—Second-Round Presidential Elections

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Key Figures:

Registered Voters: 522,933
 Total votes cast: 401,179
 Total valid votes: 379,159
 Total invalid votes: 22,020
 Invalid rate: 5.5%
 Voter turnout rate: 76.7%

Official Name:

Democratic Republic of
Timor-Leste

Population: 1,062,777

Area: 15,007 sq km

Official Languages:

Tetum, Portuguese

Literacy: 59%

Religion: 98% Catholic

Avg. per Capita Income:
\$400/year

Electoral System:

- President elected in single-constituency election for a five-year term
- Parliament elected using party lists for five-year terms
- Voter eligibility: Citizens residing in East Timor, 17 years of age or older
- 504 polling centers and 706 polling stations across 13 districts

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

On May 9, 2007, the East Timorese people overwhelmingly elected Nobel-prize winner José Ramos-Horta as the country's second president. Ramos-Horta garnered 70 percent of the vote, while his opponent, Francisco Guterres, leader of the majority Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) party, received 30 percent. The run-off presidential election took place peacefully and significant improvements in the efficiency of the counting process were observed. The success of this election is a positive step forward for East Timor and bodes well for the upcoming parliamentary elections on June 30, 2007.

The second round presidential election comes after the April 9 first round election in which none of the eight candidates garnered 50 percent of the popular vote. In this first election Guterres won 28 percent of the vote, followed by Ramos-Horta with 22 percent. Following this first round, five of the six runners-up, as well as the new and increasingly influential National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), instructed their supporters to vote for Ramos-Horta. While Ramos-Horta made major gains across the country, including a dramatic 18-fold increase in support in Ainaro District, Guterres failed to attract the necessary number of additional voters for victory.

For this election, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) provided support to the Coalition for Monitoring the General Elections (KOME), produced informational materials for party observers and voters, and observed the electoral process at over 20 polling stations. This edition of *NDI Elections Watch* offers an overview of the second round presidential elections.

Political Overview

East Timor emerged from 25 years of Indonesian occupation in 1999 following a popular consultation administered by the United Nations (UN). The nation of one million gained full independence 32 months later in 2002. Despite significant undersea oil wealth, East Timor remains the poorest country in Asia, and, in terms of *per capita* non-oil income, the world.

Ongoing instability remains a major concern in East Timor. Violence broke out in April-May 2006, causing over 30 deaths and the internal displacement of over 15 percent of the nation's population. The arrival of over 3,000 peacekeepers and UN Police, under the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), has largely stabilized the country.

Candidates

The second round election was a contest between two veterans of East Timorese politics and the young country's struggle for independence. Prior to independence, José Ramos-Horta was the international face of Timorese nationalism and served as the Permanent Representative of FRETILIN to the United Nations. Upon independence, Ramos-Horta became Foreign Minister. Following the resignation of Mari Alkatiri in 2006, Ramos-Horta assumed the post of Prime Minister. Ramos-Horta ran for office as an independent; his strongest support comes from Dili and surrounding districts (see Chart I).

Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres joined the FALINTIL resistance movement in 1974 and fought against the Indonesian occupation from the mountains of East Timor until 1999. In 1997, following the death of Konis Santana, Guterres became the most senior leader within FRETILIN, a position he continues to hold. In 2001, Guterres became a member of the Constituent Assembly. He currently serves as the President of Parliament. Guterres' support base is concentrated in the east of the country.

Campaign Period

The two-week campaign period, June 22 – May 6, was unmarred by significant violence. The campaign period, however, was not without flaw and the two candidates engaged in frequent, vitriolic at-

tacks; leveled unsubstantiated charges of intimidation and fraud against each other; and made campaign promises concerning issues outside of the purview of the presidency. During the campaign period, the National Electoral Commission (CNE) issued a statement calling for both sides to refrain from personal insults.

In its preliminary report, the European Union Observer Mission criticized the candidates for a "blatant disregard for Timor-Leste's continuing fragility" and stated that they "emphasized divisive issues and neglected the need for national reconciliation." The tone of the campaign critically influences voter behavior and media coverage; many hope that the conduct of the parliamentary campaigns will be less heated and more substantive.

Voting Process

NDI observed the voting process overall to be free and fair – a credit to Timorese voters. East Timorese voters once again showed their determination to vote by participating in the election, often having to walk great distances to reach a polling center.

On election day, NDI observed again that in some station procedures were insufficiently followed, for example the punching of voter cards and the inking of the incorrect finger. However, voting day proceeded smoothly and the number and seriousness of irregularities were diminished.

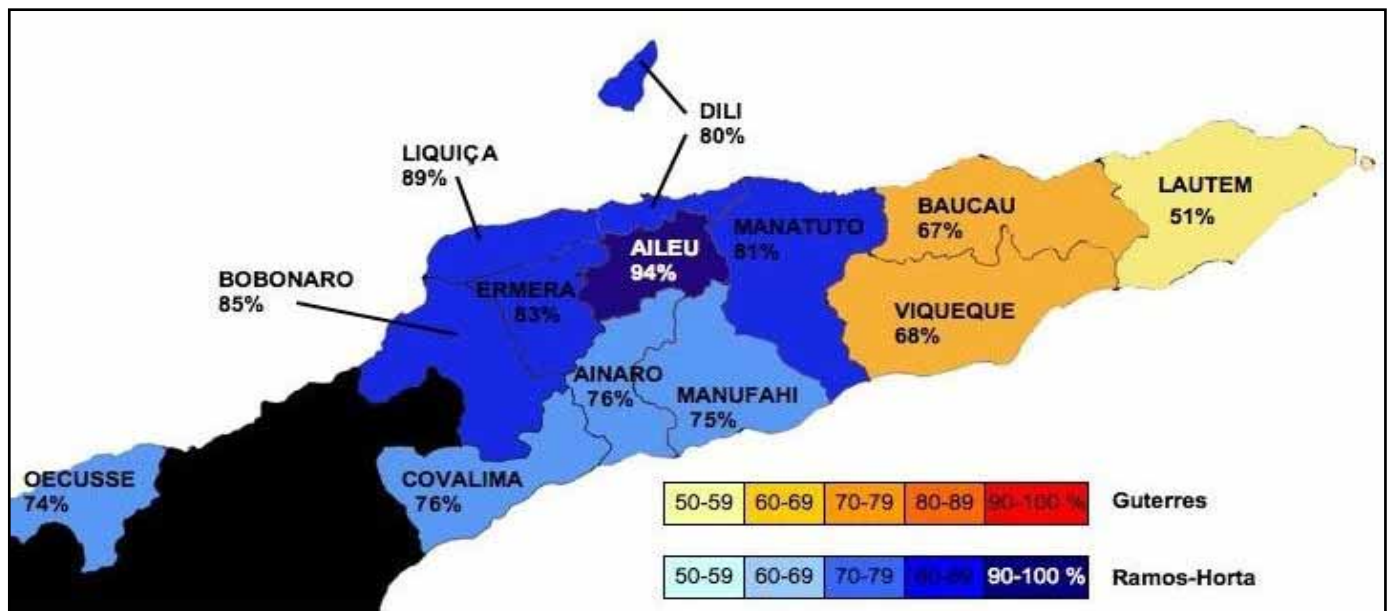
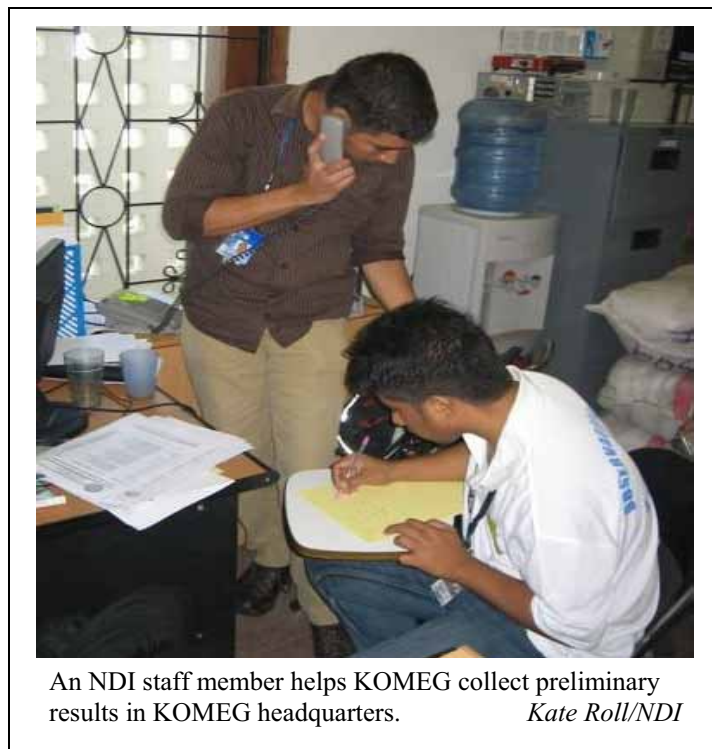


Chart I: Results by District, Second Round Presidential Election

Voter Turnout

The voter turnout rate was 77 percent, a slight drop from the first round turnout rate of 82 percent. The percentage of blank and invalid votes dropped slightly to 5.5 percent. The distribution of voters shifted during the second round, with more people voting in the districts of Dili, Manatuto and Liquica (8 percent, 5 percent and 15 percent increase, respectively) than in the first round. Fewer votes were cast in Aileu, Ainaro and Covalima.

As with the first round, voters came early to the polls and, according to the Coalition for Monitoring the General Elections (KOMEK), the majority of voting was completed before noon and the lines were generally shorter. While ballot shortfalls were reported across the nation during the first round, in the second round only eight polling centers requested more ballots from the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE). STAE was able to distribute additional ballots in a timely fashion.



An NDI staff member helps KOMEK collect preliminary results in KOMEK headquarters. *Kate Roll/NDI*

Observation

KOMEK once again fielded over 1,000 observers. For the May election, KOMEK placed observers in 90 percent of East Timor's 705 polling stations and covered all thirteen districts. KOMEK reported an increase in incidents in which polling staff refused observers entrance to polling stations. International observers, including representatives of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), Japan, and the European Union, were also present across East Timor. NDI joined the observation effort and visited polling centers throughout Dili.

Irregularities

The frequency and severity of irregularities decreased with the second round election, reflecting an increased understanding of polling procedures by both voters and poll workers. In one instance, reports noted that some adolescents under age 17 who had been permitted to vote in the first round were correctly denied the opportunity to vote in the second round. In one instance, 84 ballot papers were distributed to voters that had already been marked for Guterres. These fraudulent ballots were promptly collected and canceled. The problem of insufficient ballot papers was largely remedied, with shortfalls reported in only a handful of polling centers.

The post-election period has generally been peaceful, although some violence between political supporters has been reported. On 15 May, six days after election day, politically-motivated violence was reported in the districts of Viqueque and Ermera, leaving 14 people injured and the destruction of seven houses. The incident is under investigation by the United Nations and Timorese Police.

Counting and Tabulation Process

The counting and tabulation process, which required extra time in the first round, was completed speedily and with fewer issues. This can be attributed both to additional training for polling staff as well as allowing district polling staff to make corrections and fill in missing information on the tally sheets (*actas*). The speed of the counting process meant that many stations were able to complete counting before sunset.

The CNE, however, failed to distribute complete poll results. Even three weeks after the election, no data had been widely released concerning invalid votes (blank, null, and cancelled). While these data would not affect the outcome, they provide important insights into participation rates and the effectiveness of voter education materials.

The final election results were approved by



A poll worker reads aloud the ballot box seal number (Escola Xina, Dili) *Roll/NDI*

the Court of Appeals in a timely manner.

Preparations for Parliamentary Election

As the second round elections were concluding, important preparations and deadlines relating to the parliamentary elections were also being handled by the CNE. On May 11, only two days after the run-off election, the political parties were required to submit their lists of candidates. The CNE's approval process was completed on 21 May.

The parliamentary elections are more complex than either round of the presidential election and preparations are ongoing to improve the performance of STAE, CNE, polling staff, and observers. KOMEG will begin an additional round of observer trainings in early June to acquaint KOMEG observers with significant changes to electoral laws and review procedures.

NDI Programs

KOMEG, which receives financial and technical support from NDI, emerged as an important participant

in both rounds of the presidential election. The 19-member coalition successfully deployed over 1,000 observers across all of East Timor's 13 districts. By far the largest single contributor of local poll-watchers, KOMEG members constituted over 60 percent of all registered domestic elections monitors. During the counting process, KOMEG was the only non-governmental group to provide polling data. On election day, and in the immediate aftermath, KOMEG provided press releases on its activities and observations. KOMEG is expected to release a report of its observations in June.

NDI was also instrumental in producing voter education pamphlets and posters detailing how to correctly mark a ballot. Two thousand, five-hundred "Vota Los/Vota La Los" (Correct Vote/Incorrect Vote) pamphlets were distributed by STAE and through KOMEG's network. Party representatives are permitted to observe the election from within the polling station; there were, however, no trainings devoted to teaching these party observers about polling procedures. NDI, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development, also produced a booklet on correct voting procedures. The booklets included lists of important steps in the voting and counting processes and key sections of the electoral law.

NDI will continue to support KOMEG and work closely with STAE in the upcoming parliamentary elections.



Poll workers sorting ballots after completing the counting (Dili). *Roll/NDI*

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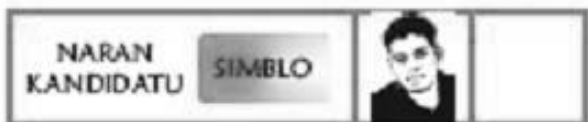
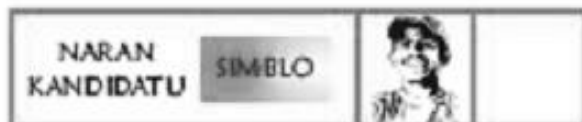
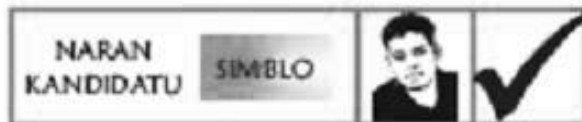
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VOTA LOS !



VOTU VALIDU



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Pontu ho lapijeira ka halo kuak ho pregu iha kuadru laran



Visto (v) iha fotografia, simbolo, ka naran kandidatu iha kuadru laran

